DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 079 815 EA 005 139

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Carol, Lila N. |
| TITLE | A Study of Methods for Evaluating Chief School Officers in Local School Districts. Management Information Series No. 1. |
| INSTITUTION | New Jersey School Boards Association, Trenton. |
| PUB DATE | Oct 72 |
| NOTE | 56p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | New Jersey School Boards Association, Box 909, Trenton, New Jersey 08605. ($2.00, Quantity Discounts) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.65 HC Not Available from EDRS. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Administrator Evaluation; *Boards of Education; Chief Administrators; *Educational Research; Evaluation Methods; Guidelines; *State Surveys; *Superintendents |
| IDENTIFIERS | New Jersey |

ABSTRACT

This paper reports a study designed as a preliminary effort to learn how chief school officials are evaluated by boards of education and to make recommendations for improving evaluation procedures. The descriptive research reported herein (1) identifies the status of evaluative procedures for chief school administrators in New Jersey, (2) investigates existing practices, (3) determines the extent to which formalized systems of appraisal have begun to evolve, and (4) assesses the desire of school boards to develop such procedures. (Author/JF)

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# A STUDY OF METHODS FOR EVALUATING CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICERS IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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BY
LILA N. CAROL, FELLOW
NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

OCTOBER 1972

EA 005 139

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# Table of Contents


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Preface | | 1 |
| Introduction | | 3 |
| Data in Response to Questionnaire | | 7 |
| Interviews in Twelve New Jersey Districts | | 19 |
| Conclusions and Recommendations | | 33 |
| Bibliography | | 39 |
| Reading List | | 39 |
| Appendices | | |
| Appendix A | Tables 1 - 13 | 43 |
| Appendix B | List A - C | 53 |

# Foreword

In 1971 the New Jersey School Boards Association instituted a program of grants in aid to support research that would be of value to boards of education in New Jersey.

Four grants of $250 each were made available during the first year of the program. Preference was given to candidates for doctor's degrees although suitable projects within programs leading to the master's degree were also considered.

The major findings of the research projects were to be made available to the New Jersey School Boards Association for possible publication and dissemination to school boards in the State. A *Study of Methods for Evaluating Chief School Officers in Local School Districts, Phase I — New Jersey*, by Lila N. Carol, Fellow, National Program for Educational Leadership, is the first such project. It is a piece of descriptive research which (1) identifies the status of evaluative procedures for chief school administrators in New Jersey and New York, (2) investigates existing practices, (3) determines the extent to which formalized systems of appraisal has begun to evolve, and (4) assesses the desire of school boards to develop such procedures.

In an effort to appraise the effectiveness of the series, we invite our readers to submit their evaluations and recommendations to the New Jersey School Boards Association, P.O. Box 909, Trenton, New Jersey 08605.

Margaret K. Yaure
Research Associate
December 1972

**"Successful leadership . . .
involves . . . movement
in the right direction."**

New York State Regents Advisory Committee
on Educational Leadership, 1971.

# Preface

This study was undertaken as the direct result of my personal involvement in a city school district as a former president of a board of education which was beginning to struggle with the concept of accountability. The study has only been accomplished, however, because of the assistance of a number of people who were as interested as I in examining evaluation procedures for chief school officers in local school districts.

To Mark Hurwitz, Harold Seamon and Margaret Yaure of the New Jersey School Boards Association and to Everett Dyer, Donald Brossman and James Vetro of the New York State School Boards Association, whose organizations supported some of the costs involved in the first phase of the study, I owe a debt of thanks. Hopefully, it will be repaid by the completion of the study which is meant to shed some light on a little-examined area of school administration.

To James A. Kelly of the Ford Foundation, David W. Minar of Northwestern University, Richard C. Snyder of the Ohio State University and Max Weiner of the City University of New York, I owe a debt of thanks for the light which they shed for me. Their suggestions during the planning stages infinitely improved the concept and scope of the study.

To Michael D. Usdan, Coordinator of the National Program for Educational Leadership at City University of New York, goes the credit for encouragement, unflagging enthusiasm and an abundance of ideas for the project.

William Ramsay of the New Jersey Association of School Admininstrators was most helpful in directing my attention to interesting school districts and personnel in New Jersey.

I am grateful for the work of David L. Levington, fellow Fellow in the National Program for Educational Leadership (NPEL). His interviews have given the report much of its flavor. Thanks, too, to Norman Costa, doctoral candidate at City University of New York, who designed the computer program. Others who helped include Domingo Clemente, another NPEL colleague who read the manuscript, and Dorothy Jasper whose pointed questions and judicious editing, hopefully, have kept me on target.

The acknowledgement would not be complete without mention of the many superintendents, district principals and school board presidents who participated in the study. Interest

in the project was very high and many school people sent encouraging notes along with their responses. I hope that the study accurately reflects their needs and will serve them in their endeavors to improve administrative and educational performance in their own districts.

Finally, I am grateful to the National Program for Educational Leadership which has provided the opportunity for this study to be made.

While credit for much is extended to many, responsibility for the analysis and interpretation of the data rests with the author alone.

Lila N. Carol
Fellow,
National Program for Educational
Leadership
New York City
September 1972

# Introduction

The present study was designed as a preliminary effort to learn how chief school officials are evaluated, at a time when schools are under increasing scrutiny by teachers, students, and communities as well as by boards of education. The particular focus of the study is on the process of evaluating the work of the chief school officer by the board of education.

In planning the study, several key questions were posed: On what basis do boards of education judge the quality of their chief school officers' performances? What are the needs of school boards for procedures which elicit information as a basis for such evaluation? Why do boards fill these needs? How can they improve their methods of assessment? The study undertakes to (1) identify the status of evaluative procedures for chief school administrators in two populous states, New York and New Jersey, (2) investigate existing practices, (3) determine the extent to which formalized systems of appraisal have begun to evolve, (4) assess the desires of school boards to develop such procedures.

This report is Phase I, which deals with local school districts in the State of New Jersey. Since the two hundred and seventeen (36%) local school districts in New Jersey, including the twelve selected for in-depth interviews, did not represent a sampling, the findings are *not* generalized for the entire state. However, from the reports of a substantial number and variety of New Jersey districts, it is possible to see trends emerging, processes coalescing, and solutions developing that can serve as guidlines for those school districts which are contemplating new procedures for assessment of their chief school officers.

In size, New Jersey is the fifth smallest state, yet it is the most highly urbanized one. Its population lives mainly in the cities of the northeastern section close to metropolitan New York. Much of the state, particularly in the southern portion, is rural in character. Huge areas, once open farmland, are being developed into industrial parks and headquarters of large national corporations: Economic, political, and cultural diversity abounds and is easily observed.

Even though New Jersey, generously endowed with human and physical resources, ranks among the leaders of the fifty states in per-capita income, it has been traditionally a low-service and low-tax state. In 1969-70, for example, the state ranked third in *local support* in per pupil expenditures as a

result of the highest property taxes in the nation while it ranked only forty-first in *state support* to public schools.[1]

The tradition of local control has been a chief factor in the minimal support of education on the state level and in the plethora of small, inefficient school districts, each of which prefers its own procedures for dealing with education problems.

A new pressure for reform has arisen in New Jersey. Its present system of financing public education, based primarily on local property taxes, has been declared unconstitutional in the New Jersey State Superior Court on the grounds that it denies equal educational opportunity.

Consequently, the legislature may be forced to approve a program in the near future similar to the one initiated by Governor William Cahill which has just been rejected.

Despite the inhibiting nature of the present tenure law, the data collected indicated that many New Jersey school boards have instituted, or want to develop, evaluative procedures. Evaluation can be employed for the purpose of helping the chief school officer improve his performance and thus improve many aspects of the school's operations.

If the board of education does not establish a positive attitude of the outset, but views evaluation solely as a way to identify weaknesses, it is unlikely that the process can serve any useful purpose where the chief school officer is protected by tenure. Among the 217 districts in the study, the major emphasis has been to utilize evaluative procedures for the purpose of improving educational and managerial procedures.

The call for accountability affects all levels and areas of the educational hierarchy. Research is being conducted on performance-based evaluation of teachers. Management objectives are being studied, and in some rare cases, implemented for principals and supervisory personel. Schoolmen and boards of education are becoming more aware of the uses of program-planning-budgeting systems (PPBS) and other management devices. Many districts are installing similar systems in their effort to evaluate their schools' activities and to help point the way to improved management strategies. Performance contracting, too, has captured the imagination of many school leaders in their attempt to secure accountability.

There is a dearth of information on how to assay the accountability of the chief school officer. School districts

[1]National Educational Association, Research Division, **Ranking of the States, 1970,** Research Report, 170-71 (Washington, D.C., 1970)

evaluate their chief executives, but information on these processes has not been collated, organized, or disseminated to any appreciable extent despite its implications for judging a school district's total planning. It is the purpose of this study to provide some guidelines toward this end.

# Analysis Of The Data In Responses To Questionnaire

The following section examines briefly the responses from two hundred and seventeen districts in the New Jersey Study. The instrument appears in Appendix B.

**Question No. 1.**
***What kind of procedures does your school district have for evaluating your chief school officer?***

Of the 207 districts responding to this question, six (3%) indicated their use of formal procedures *only*. The greatest number, 129 (62%) employ informal procedures. Eleven (5%) use a combination of formal and informal procedures. Sixty-one school districts (29%) do not have any procedures to evaluate their chief school officer. (Table 6)

When procedures currently employed by districts are compared with other variables such as types of school districts, elected or appointed boards of education, female or male respondents, or length of chief school officer's tenure in current position, there is little variation in the responses. (Table 1) A wide range of both formal and informal procedures became apparent early in the study.

## Formal Methods of Evaluation

Of the two hundred and sixteen responding districts, six districts (3%) indicated the use of formal methods solely. Eleven districts (5%) indicated they used formal procedures, but combined them with informal methods, bringing the total to seventeen districts that employ formal procedures. Sixteen of the seventeen districts have elected boards of education.

No meaningful relationship between a district's student population and the application of formal evaluation can be shown. Table 2 shows that the districts with formal evaluation range in size from 620 to 21,500 pupils.

Notably absent from the list of districts in this table is any large city. Both of the large districts in this table represent townships with burgeoning and newly diverse populations. Neither is comparable, however, to New Jersey's crowded, poor cities where conflicts over the issues of race relations, teacher

militancy, educational quality, and finances have erupted with fearful intensity.

Several of the cities did respond to the questionnaire with indications of need to formulate evaluative procedures. Two others did not perceive any such need. Interestingly enough, one of the city school districts, responding in the negative to this question, is well-known for its strong political influence and intervention in the operation of its schools. With such influence upon the school board members and staff, it is unlikely that the generally accepted criteria for performance would be considered an urgent matter. More likely, school authorities – professionals and lay staff alike – would be more interested in satisfying the needs of City Hall than those of students or parents.

The most significant relationship shown in Table 2 is that between the districts with formal processes and the length of time their chief school officer's have held their current positions. All of the districts with formal procedures have chief school officers who have been on the job for seven years or less. The average tenure in the sixteen districts is 36 months.

In several cases involving new chief school officers, the formal evaluations – all of which have been in effect for a very few years – were planned with the outgoing superintendent. These criteria and methods are being used by the boards with their new chief school officers. Almost without exception, the districts indicated that their procedures still needed refining or improvement.

Formal procedures could mean merely a fixed time when the school board discussed, in the most general terms, what it thought of the chief school administrator when setting his salary for the coming year. Another district might have a fixed time, record its discussions (specific topics and general remarks) and furnish a report of their deliberations to the chief school officer. Still others have developed extensive lists of criteria used by school board members individually to judge the chief school officer, after which a composite report and recommendations are given to the chief school officer.

That school board presidents' perceptions of formal procedures have an almost ingenious variety of connotations will be seen further in the report under the section devoted to findings in districts where interviews took place. For the most part, the chief school officers in districts with formal procedures are fairly new to their positions, and are progressive, well informed on educational and managerial concepts, and were providing the leadership in the formulation of goals, educational practices and assessment measures for their districts.

## Informal Methods of Evaluation

Informal methods vary even more widely than those of the formal. Among the former are private meetings of board members at a member's home where a general discussion takes place with those board members who are able to attend. The results may or may not be transmitted to the chief school officer. In other instances, a meeting of the board is called because of dissatisfaction with some (or all) aspects of the chief school officer's performance. Usually this meeting is unplanned and may be the direct result of a crisis.

Many districts report that their informal evaluation takes place continuously through constant association with the chief school officer, observation of his behavior, and informal feedback from the community. The "community" may mean organized groups with spokesmen or an occasional telephone call from a disgruntled person made to an individual board member.

Interestingly, some districts categorized their procedures as informal, but actually do use criteria, either lists of specifics or broad general categories; frequently, however, these are not used on a regular basis.

It seems, therefore, that the current definition of evaluation among boards can mean anything from an *ad hoc* discussion in a telephone booth of any aspect of the chief school officer's personality or performance all the way up to a systematic routine which has been planned and implemented by the board with contributions made by school district employees.

The comments by school board presidents about the methods they employ to evaluate chief school officers indicate that by far the most popular method consists of an open-ended discussion among board members. One respondent described the process as "conversations among board members." Topics included in the informal evaluation ranged from anything that affects the schools tangentially to the most direct and fundmental issues. Discussion can center around the written comments of individual board members or, as reported frequently, may include any item that interests any member at the moment. A crisis may be weighted heavily for or against the chief school officer to the exclusion of other criteria which the board might consider important at times other than during the evaluation. The discussion might be limited to whether or not the board is satisfied with the general operation of the schools only in relation to the salary it will set for the chief school officer

for the following year. Several districts, while the settings in which the evaluation is discussed, might be informal, actually have a broad group of criteria which form the agenda for the meeting. Again, the latter procedure is developed in greater detail in a section of the report dealing with interviews of board presidents and chief school officers.

**Question No. 2.**
***If you do not already have formal procedures for evaluating your chief school officer, do you feel the need to develop formal procedures?***

One hundred and ninety districts responded to this question with 65% indicating the desire to develop formal procedures and 35% responding in the negative. When these responses are examined in relation to the same factors described under Question Number 1, there remains a high degree of similarity in the responses as indicated in Table 3. Only three variables of the thirteen shown in this table indicate any important differences in the perception of the need to develop formal procedures.

For example, while evaluative practices and desire for formal procedures are not significantly different between boards of education headed by males and females, 77% of the women presidents expressed a need for formalized practices as compared with 62% of the men. However, of those boards led by women, 42% currently do not have any procedures to evaluate the chief school officer as compared with only 27% of the male led boards. These figures tend to become neutralized as indicators of need because of present practices. Obviously, since more boards headed by women do not have assessment procedures, the desire to develop them is indicated by a larger percentage than that of male leaders.

Another example is a group with a high percentage (91%) desiring formal procedures. This is a group of districts with new chief school officers. (The significance of this variable is discussed more fully on page 22.)

## No Methods of Evaluation, No Felt Need

Of sixty-one districts reporting no evaluation procedures, twelve (20%) do not feel the need to develop any. (Table 4) Most of these districts were quite small, with student populations of 300 to 1,300. Several comments indicated that these school

boards worked very closely on a day-to-day basis with their chief school officers. Through their constant contact with the community they were fully aware of the chief school officer's performance. It is noteworthy that eight of these twelve districts have retained the same chief administrator for periods ranging from eight to eighteen years. Several respondents of those districts remarked that it was too late to institute procedures for evaluation of the incumbent. When a new chief school officer is to be selected, they would move toward development and implementation of evaluative procedures. The data of Table 4 analyzing the twelve districts, does not show any marked relationship between district wealth and expenditure, and utilization of evaluative procedures (or the desire to institute them).

## No Methods of Evaluation, But Felt Need to Develop Them

Of the sixty-one districts reporting no evaluation methods for their chief school officers, forty-six (75%) of them indicated that they felt the need to develop some system of assessment. Many of these districts have larger student populations and staffs than those districts which do not perceive a need for formal evaluation. (Table 5) Among the forty-six districts, a number of reasons contribute to the belief that formal procedures would be beneficial.

Twelve of these districts have chief school officers who have been with them less than two years. In these cases, school boards want to develop a more systematic means of assessing their chief school officer in order to improve his performance.

Twenty-four of the districts have chief school officers who have been with the district for periods ranging from eight to forty-six years. Here, too, feelings are expressed that changes need to be made in the district and/or in the chief school officer's performance. Several remarked that change for a new system of accountability would not occur until the retirement of the incumbent chief school officer made way to a replacement. In cases where the board members are fairly new to their positions, statements were made about the need for systematic reporting and accountability in an era of more complex issues, duties and responsibilities for the school systems' employees. A number of respondents requested that information, resulting from this study, be made available to their districts for future use.

**Question No. 3.**
***If your board has informal procedures, please describe them briefly.***

While a total of one hundred and twenty-eight districts responded indicating the use of informal procedures, only one hundred and twelve described them.

Respondents did not discriminate between methods of evaluation or criteria to be assessed. The questionnaire did not define the terms sufficiently, resulting in answers which required further interpretation. To ascertain the methods and criteria employed by boards of education in evaluating their chief school officers, respondents' statements were classified into seven methods and ten criteria employed. Table A lists the *methods* that the school boards employ and the frequency with which each was cited. Table B lists the *criteria* boards employ and the frequency of their use by respondents.

## Table A

### Informational Methods Used To Evaluate Chief School Officers By 112 Districts

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Board and/or board committee discussions in executive session | 67 | 60 |
| Observation and association of board with chief school officer at meetings and work sessions | 28 | 25 |
| Discussion of board members or president with chief school ifficer | 20 | 18 |
| Written ratings or appraisals by board members | 8 | 7 |
| Assessment of special, monthly and/or annual reports of chief school officer | 6 | 5 |
| Evaluation against prior year's activities | 4 | 4 |
| Comparison with other districts | 1 | 1 |

112 districts responded with a combination of methods and/or criteria.

## Table B

### Criteria Used To Evaluate Chief School Officers In 112 Districts With Informal Procedures

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Relationships with staff, community and students | 23 | 21 |
| General effectiveness of chief school officer | 22 | 20 |
| Overall district performance | 8 | 7 |
| Budget development, passage and implementation | 5 | 4 |
| Recruitment, employment and supervision of personnel by chief school officer | 4 | 4 |
| Personal qualities of chief school officer | 3 | 3 |
| Curriculum development and implementation | 2 | 2 |
| Plans and objectives of the chief school officer | 2 | 2 |
| Professional growth of chief school officer | 1 | 1 |
| Graduates' employment records | 1 | 1 |

112 districts responded with a combination of methods and/or criteria.

Indications, confirmed by the data, lead the author to believe that school boards, elected or appointed, large or small, suburban or urban, rich or poor, are cognizant of the serious and growing problem of providing a system of accountability for their schools. Even those districts which have been making groping efforts to supply some measures of accountability for professional staff have hardly considered expanding their efforts upward to the chief school officer.

They are beginning to realize that it is futile to attempt to insitute accountability measures for teachers and principals while stopping short at the superintendent's door—and even at

the school board's door. Measuring accountability cannot be truly effective if it is instituted only at selected levels of a hierarchical organization. The first step toward a system of accountability must begin with the *board of education* itself. In their pamphlet, "MONITORING ACCOUNTABILITY," the *Croft Review* suggests a board policy which clearly places the responsibility:

> *The board of education accepts primary responsibility for promoting and maintaining a comprehensive accountability plan and set of procedures for the school system.*[2]

The act of writing such policy establishes the fundamental philosophy for a regularized program of accountability. This is undoubtedly the easiest step and one which appears fairly often in school board policies. On too many occasions, however, it serves as both the beginning and the end of a school district's commitment and sense of responsibility. The process becomes more taxing as the board arrives at the more specific tasks. How will the district proceed with its plans for comprehensive accountability. What methods will be employed? What criteria will be established? By whom? Who will participate in the evaluation?

For the purposes of this report, the process was narrowed to the procedure for evaluating the chief school officer. It was not the author's purpose to provide models for every district. The procedures and reactions of those engaged in the evaluative process are reported. It does seem appropriate, however, to suggest some approaches when school boards and their chief administrators can employ to improve the uncertain, sometimes accidental, situations in which they find themselves.

It is not axiomatic that improved performance, personal and professional growth are automatically achieved with greater age and experience. Observation and assessment are only the first two parts of an effective evaluation. Assuming that the purpose of the evaluation is to improve the performance of the educational leader, as well as to measure progress, consideration must be given to the ways in which the individual may improve.

Ordinarily, both diagnosis and prescription is made in accordance with a "chain of command," that is to say the chief school officers is, generally, evaluated solely by the members of the school board. For at least a decade, numbers of teachers have been requesting a part in the evaluation of their principals, and more recently, a growing number of principals and other

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[2]Croft Educational Services, Inc. "Monitoring Accountability", D. Davies, ed., **The Croft Board Service,** No. 6 (New London, Conn.: 1971-72)

administrators have been desirous of the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of their chief school officers. Some methods to help meet these requests are being tried, based on the premise that the use of "multiple evaluators" can bring wider perspectives to bear on the process. It also offers broader participation in educational decision-making.

This study shows that in at least three districts employing *formal* evaluative procedures for the chief school officer, administrators were being involved in the evaluation. Only one of those districts had invited the participation of teachers in planning the evaluation. Several had used available material to assist them in developing procedures and criteria.

One of the larger districts in New Jersey developed a method in which principals and central office administrators were directly involved in evaluating their chief school officer's performance. A list of nineteen criteria, couched in descriptive phrases, was developed to be used by board of education members individually and by administrative staff members individually. Two separate composites were then drawn, one reflecting the board's replies and the other for those of the staff. Both are discussed by the school board and the results, plus written comments from individuals, are presented to the superintendent. The chief school officer has the opportunity to discuss the evaluation with the staff. In this district, both the superintendent and the board president agree that a cooperative effort makes the evaluative process and its outcome much more effective. The criteria in this particular district—now in the process of emendation—do not include performance objectives. At the time of the study, criteria, which had been used for one year, consisted primarily of qualities, characteristics and general responsibilities of the school officer. The district is now moving toward a combination of these indicators with job performance objectives which will facilitate the assessment of programs and performance.

Self-evaluation is another technique in use. The chief school officer submits a report and assessment of his activities which are then discussed by the board with the chief school officer. In an alternative method, the chief school officer evaluates his own performance against specific performance goals which have been established jointly by the board and himself.

Specific job objectives are in contrast to the most popular criteria extant. These widely-used performance standards are, generally, indicators of qualities and skills which the district believes to be vital for a successful performance by the chief

school officer. They are frequently described as "character," "guts," "sound judgement," "decision-making ability," "good staff and/or community relations," "sound philosophy of education," "ability to plan ahead," and "proper degree of confidence and idealism." While they may be important for a superior performance, how does a board make a sound judgement about the "proper degree, etc."?

## Responses to Questions about Formal Procedures in 17 Districts

**Question No. 4.**
***Check all of those groups which are directly involved in formally evaluating the performance of your chief school officer.***

One hundred percent of the boards do the evaluations themselves. In some cases, the evaluation is conducted by a committee of the board and then its report is transmitted to the entire membership for review. No districts in the study involved students, parents, or other citizens in the evaluative procedure. However, community opinions over the course of the year are considered under the criteria labeled as "community or student relationships." Three districts with formal procedures involve administrators and teachers in the chief school officers's evaluation. Others consider the attitude of staff toward the chief school administrator and are indicated in the criteria labeled "chief school officer/staff relationships." (Table 6)

**Question No. 5.**
***Is your board's formal evaluation of the chief school officer conducted in written form? Oral form? Both forms?***

Written form to some means a subjective statement about the chief school officer by each board member. For others, it may take the form of individually scored rating sheets from which a composite rating is developed. The evaluation may be heavily weighted toward rating the chief school officer with scores or it may attempt to examine perfor nance targets. Both can, and sometimes do, serve as a springboard for counseling and advising the chief school officer as well as developing future plans. The list as a type of assessment tends in many cases to be an end in itself, unless it is combined with discussion.

**Question No. 6.**
***Who participates in the development of your board's formal evaluation procedures?***

From the responses shown in Table 7, it is clear that school boards do, for the most part, retain for themselves the responsibility of assessing the chief school officer's performance, as well as the development of methods and criteria. Concern was expressed that boards might lose power and control by giving "too much" to staff and community.

**Question No. 7.**
***How often is the formal evaluation of the chief school officer's performance conducted?***

Generally the evaluation is an annual review. In the case of probationary superintendents, an evaluation may be applied more frequently. (Table 8)

**Question No. 8.**
***Is the evaluation of the chief school officer's performance treated as public information?***

Only one of the fifteen respondents said that the evaluation is made public. One respondent remarked that if the evaluation was favorable, no public notice was given. However, if the chief school officer received a poor evaluation report, he might leave the district and therefore the public would be aware of the assessment. When a large number of people is involved in the evaluative procedure, confidentiality cannot be maintained. The board's accountability to the public will be shown in its report on the chief school officer's evaluation.

## Other Facts Emerging From Questionnaire

### Chief School Officer's Length of Service Related to Existing Procedures and Perception of Needs

The most significant variable relating to evaluative procedures and perceived need for them is the length of time a chief school officer has served in his current position in the district.

Of the total sample of 217 districts responding to the

questionnaire, 200 indicated the length of the chief school officer's tenure. In the twenty-five districts where the chief school officer has held his position for ten months or less, 91% of the respondents felt the need for creation of formal evaluative procedures in their districts. Of this group, 42% currently do not have any form of evaluative procedures for the chief school officer; 42% have informal methods; and 17% have a combination of formal and informal procedures. As indicated in Table 10, the second stratum, that of seventy-four chief school officers with eleven to forty-nine months of service, contains the highest percentage with some form of assessment. Only 18% of these districts report no evaluation procedures.

Sixty-two percent (62%) of all districts in the sample report existing, informal procedures; 5% formal; 3% both, and 29% with none at all. It is evident that within the 65% of those desiring formalized procedures, there are substantial numbers which want to move from an informal to a formal process. On a number of questionnaires, respondents stated that their boards are now in the process of developing an evaluation procedure, or are thinking about future development. The last four categories—service of one year and up—indicate a need for improvement, but not nearly as strongly as those with newly appointed chief school officers.

**Male/Female Leadership**

An unplanned, interesting (but hardly surprising) statistic emerged concerning the numbers of male and female board presidents, as well as male and female chief school officers. (Table 9)

Women account for 67% of all classroom teachers in the public schools of the country. The traditional career ladder for entry into top administrative posts has always been through the classroom; yet, nationally, only 19.6% of those in administrative and supervisory positions are women.[3]

[3] "Professional Women in Public Schools, 1970-71," **Research Bulletin,** National Education Association, October, 1971, pp. 67-68.

# Interviews In Twelve New Jersey Districts

Interviews were conducted in an attempt to obtain more qualitative data on the evaluative processes in use in the twelve districts selected. The responses to the questionnaire were used as a guide in preparing the instrument used in the interview. Three major areas were emphasized: 1) the purposes of evaluation; 2) the methods used to conduct evaluation; and 3) the criteria employed.

The aim of the personal interview was to determine what kinds of procedures were actually in use, since the responses to the questionnaire left some doubt regarding "formality" or, in some cases, the "informality" of the methods. Further, based on inconsistencies in the written answers, there was some doubt about the actual use of the procedures described by respondents. It appeared that some of the description might be wishful thinking.

Attempting to get clarification of the formal or informal aspects of a district's procedures, two questions in the interview schedule asked about the consistency of the methods and criteria employed, as well as the scheduling of the evaluative process. During some interviews, it became quite clear that very few systems have, indeed, instituted a formalized procedure with pre-planning of goals and methods. Nevertheless, some of these factors are in evidence in varying degrees in a number of districts.

Each of the twelve districts had indicated that it did conduct an evaluation, six employing formal procedures and six using informal methods. Four districts were in the student population category of under 3000-5999 range; and four districts with over 6000 students. The wealth of the districts ran from the 30th to the 94th percentile of all New Jersey districts. Both K-8 and K-12 districts are represented. One district has retained the same chief school officer for fourteen years. The remainder have chief school officers who have served from less than one year up to seven years. These variables, plus current per pupil expenditures, are shown with other data concerning characteristics of board members and of their communities in Table 11.

Nineteen interviews were conducted with eleven chief school officers and eight school board presidents. The interview instrument, in addition to containing questions about purposes,

methods and criteria for evaluation, asked for the interviewed respondent's perceptions of the methods employed in his district—advantages, disadvantages and finally, what obstacles there might be to implementation of new procedures. (Copies of the instruments appear as Appendix B.)

## Purposes of Evaluation

List A includes a number of reasons stated by respondents on the original questionnaire which had been mailed to all districts. The list was amplified by a number of items used in a study by the Educational Research Service of the National Education Association.[4] Using List A with the interview schedule, each respondent was requested to indicate the purposes for which his board applies evaluation. It was specified by the interviewer that the survey seeks to establish the status quo, not the ideal application of procedures. (Table 12)

Fourteen of the nineteen respondents (89%) interviewed indicated that the primary reason for evaluating the chief school officer is to identify areas needing improvement in his performance. Fourteen (74%) felt that evaluative procedures provide a way to measure accountability for both the chief administrator and the board itself in the performance of their duties and responsibilities.

It is interesting to contrast the boards' stated purposes *vis a vis* the chief school officer's perception of the real purposes of such assessments. Seventy-three percent (73%) of the chief school officers while fifty percent (50%) of board members felt that evaluation is applied for the purpose of deciding upon the chief school officer's salary for the upcoming year. Sixty-three percent (63%) of board presidents interviewed believe that evaluation helps the chief school officer to establish "relevant performance goals." However, the chief school officers view this reason with a somewhat jaundiced eye. Several superintendents indicated during the course of the interviews that boards tend to "judge" rather than "help establish" performance goals, and that the development and process of setting of goals is more likely to be left to the chief school officer to determine. The same reasoning obtains with respect to "assessment of performance in accordance with board policy." Seventy-five percent (75%) of the board presidents believe this purpose to be one of the major reasons for evaluation, but sixty-four percent (64%) of the chief

[4]Education Research Service, AASA, NEA Research Division, "Evaluating Administrative/Supervisory Performance," **ERS Circular,** No. 6, 1971, p. 3.

school officers think this is not so. Frequently, interviewed respondents stated that board policy prescribes evaluation, but both boards and superintendents tend not to refer to the specifics of their written policy.

In several districts, chief school officers have been experiencing problems with their boards. Three of the superintendents felt that evaluation was being used essentially to build a case for their dismissal. One board president, while acknowledging some dissatisfactions, reasoned that his board's purpose was really far broader. He said evaluation included accountability, identifying needed improvements, establishing performance goals, and measuring the chief school officer's output against these standards.

In only a few districts did a high degree of similarity with respect to perceived purposes of evaluation emerge between the president's and the superintendent's responses. The mutuality of purpose was clearly understood by both parties only in those districts where both the board and the chief school officer devoted substantial time to thinking through their purposes and processes, as well as implementing formal procedures. Among several districts professing to employ formal assessment and among virtually all of the districts using informal procedures, a commonality of purpose and agreement on methods and criteria was not revealed. This fact would, very likely, come as a surprise to some of the interviewed respondents who repeatedly asserted that even with informal procedures, they knew and understood their respective roles and responsibilities.

Respondents were asked to mention any other reasons they may have for employing an evaluation of the chief school officer. Several answers revealed some thoughtful considerations:

> *Evaluation is applied for the benefit of the board as well as the superintendent—to ensure that its desires for the education of district students are implemented.*
>
> *The district needs to have an established set of criteria for the chief administrator's performance which will be valid regardless of the person who is the incumbent. The board must be prepared for a future in which even its highly satisfactory superintendent may not be with the district.*
>
> *The evaluation of the chief school officer should be thought of as one aspect of an entire district evaluation. Its relationship to assessment procedures for other staff members, as well as total district performance, must be recognized.*
>
> *The chief school officer can gauge his performance by*

*responsible feedback. Evaluation can suggest new directions for the chief school officer.*

*A discussion between the chief administrator and board members can clarify the latter's role and performance. This has utility in terms of staff and community expectations as well as their understanding of the policy-making and administrative branches of the system.*

Several other purposes were advanced which have very practical and immediate application. Several administrators reasoned that a formal evaluation culminating in a written document is a valuable asset in the superintendent's file. If records indicate favorable responses from the board over a period of time, the superintendent is less likely to find his position threatened by one crisis or one less-than-satisfactory situation. In addition, the record of successful performance, as it appears in his file, serves the administrator as a valuable reference for future employment. The latter point, it must be said, while acknowledged as useful by certain administrators, is not considered of vital importance to all. Many claim not to be unduly concerned with job security or written proof of their capabilities, a position taken particularly by younger administrators. In the words of one: "I don't need anything in writing in order to defend my position. I am not seeking job security above all." Nevertheless, the point of view also depends on current board/superintendent relationships and the degree of conflict in the community.

## Methods Employed in Evaluation

A list of fourteen items (List B of Interview Instrument) was presented during the interview on which the respondent was asked to check off those methods which his board currently employs in its evaluative process. Most of these methods had been outlined in the comments on the original questionnaire and were categorized as methods which were sometimes used in both formal and informal procedures. In addition to List B, respondents were asked if their boards employ any other methods.

The most frequently applied method of evaluation consists of discussions between the chief school officer and the board members. Eight of the twelve boards hold an executive session at which only members are present. The board arrives at its conclusions, after which the board president or board committee or the board as a whole, meets with the chief school officer to

discuss the results of the evaluation. Most of these boards prepare a written evaluation for presentation to their chief school officer. The assessment consists of either a composite of the individual board members' ratings on criteria lists, or a report dealing with the chief school officer's general effectiveness plus specific items which the board feels need improvement. Some boards only assess, others make suggestions for future activities, as well.

In addition to those methods which are listed and tabulated in Table 13, other procedures were mentioned by respondents. In several districts, board members get together in small, informal groups on an *ad hoc* basis to talk about the chief school officer's performance. In districts where the board has formed cliques among the members, a particular segment may meet privately to discuss their chief's activities and may decide to take a unified stand (supportive or otherwise) on some aspect of his behavior or activities. Such action, of course, minimizes the effectiveness of any legitimate evaluative procedure, as well as having a detrimental effect on the governance of the district.

In those districts with split boards, both the chief school officer and the presidents expressed concern about factionalism among board members. They felt that a formalized procedure which is planned, recognized and adhered to by all, would lessen the dissension and unhealthy atmosphere which sometimes surrounds board/superintendent relationships. A basic knowledge about and agreement on the manner in which the chief school officer is to be judged can minimize hostilities. Resentments among the concerned parties can be avoided by providing adequate opportunity for everyone to be heard.

In one district, board members wanted to have a discussion as part of the evaluative procedure for assessing their chief school officer which they felt would be franker without his presence. Accordingly, the board met officially, in executive session, *sans* superintendent.

The proceedings were taped and offered to the chief school officer for his information and response, if he so desired. Apparently, the board members felt less constrained in their remarks by the superintendent's absence, yet they wanted him to have full knowledge of their opinions. This novel procedure was, therefore, conceived.

While there may be disagreement with such a method, it is mentioned here to reinforce the notion that methods of applying evaluations may take many different routes. What is important is that the board and superintendent agree on how they will proceed, that they feel comfortable with their process, and that

they are confident they are fulfilling their responsibilities.

## Criteria Employed in Evaluation

A list of fourteen criteria, which had been culled from the comments of respondents to the mailed questionnaire, was presented to the nineteen chief school officers and board presidents for consideration. (List C with Interview Instrument in Appendix B.) They were asked to check off those criteria which are in use in their own districts in order of their importance. A rating of "1" meant that the criterion was very important to the success of a chief school officer; "2" meant of average importance, and "3" a criterion which is not an important indicator of successful administration. Respondents were asked to list additional criteria which are employed in their own districts. (Table 14) To the prepared list of criteria, several respondents added other factors which they consider important: Good press relations, good relationships with three levels of government – local, state and federal, and sensitivity to the needs of poor and minority children.

Educational leadership and knowledge were the most frequently mentioned criteria. One superintendent described this as "being aware of what is transpiring in other systems (program, innovations, etc.) and being ready to move." Another respondent stated that this means reading and interpreting trends, e.g., "defining accountability and taking the initiative." A board president suggested as an illustration: "If a principal wants to try a particular program, the superintendent should have a general knowledge about that educational area." One superintendent claimed that the chief school officer as "educational leader" is a myth. In reality, he must be a salesman, able to convince people of the worth of an educational program, of changes – even of failures. He must be informed on personnel, finance, buildings, state systems, and laws. He must be up to date on all management functions. For instance, he has to know about vandalism – its causes, frequency, costs, effects, and solutions for eradication.

None of those interviewed believed that the chief school officer should – or could – be an expert in all of the areas which fall under his ultimate responsibility. But the chief school officer should be well informed about trends, research findings and their relevance for the district's educational and management programs. Keeping abreast of developments in politics, economics, social sciences and business management are all vital for the successful chief school officer. In short, the

chief school officer must be an educated person with a good grasp of contemporary problems and possible solutions and the ability to translate them and illustrate their relationships to his own district's needs and activities. Implicit in this is the need for constant professional growth on the part of the chief school officer.

The second most important criterion, according to respondents, concerns the effectiveness of the chief school officer. While there was widespread agreement on the importance of this factor, each district had its own particular definition of such "effectiveness." One chief school officer described effectiveness as "being like the rudder on a ship—providing stability." Another, who is new to the superintendency, felt that his effectiveness will be measured by the degree and quality of change in the school district, since he was employed as a "change agent" by his board. A listing of a number of other interpretations is included to permit the reader to assess just how the term "effectiveness" relates to a particular community. For instance, a superintendent who is considered a "change agent" might be ill-considered in some districts. Being a change agent might even be considered detrimental to his success. To one board, the chief school officer's general effectiveness means, among other things, that he must provide a broader curriculum that other communities in the state and thus attract a staff of the highest caliber. In another district, however, the emphasis might well be on "bread and butter" curricula and little sympathy—or money—allotted to more esoteric subjects. Other connotations follow:

*The community thinks well of its schools. There is good communication.*

*Having all subordinates perform at a high level in their timing, accuracy and effect. Their performances reflect the chief school officer's ability to select good people.*

*Encouragement of active PTAs, teacher association committees, state projects. Work with service clubs and community curriculum council.*

*Taking the initiative and getting things started.*

*Feedback from college students indicating that they were well prepared.*

*Doing a good job for terminal education students.*

*Avoidance of crises or, when crisis is inevitable, the manner*

*in which the chief school officer manages it; e.g., promptness, objectivity.*

*How he handles board and staff. His ability to communicate with custodians as well as the college-trained. His acceptance of people for their personal worth.*

*Few complaints are received by the board.*

*The summary of all of his actions and the overall condition of the system. Is it running smoothly? Are there excessive problems? Is there general confidence in the system?*

*His ability to stand up under pressure which comes from all sides.*

A board president offered as an example of effectiveness of the chief school officer, the following: The chief school officer meets students from several high schools on a regular weekly basis for "rap" sessions. Not only does he provide information, but he receives it directly from a major source and acts accordingly. Another trait would be the ability to make decisions and implement them. At the chief school officer's instigation, the board changed the method of allocating funds to individual schools, moving from a line budget to a lump sum budget. Each unit was given authority to spend the entire amount to meet the needs perceived within the individual school. The unit principal must report on the disposition of the funds—programs, staff, maintenance, student achievement, attitudes. The chief school officer is required to evaluate the program and report to the board. The process is in its first year and the board, so far, is quite optimistic about what the results will be.

Finally, another board president commented on effectiveness thusly: "The intangible, but observable, asset which is that the community believes in the superintendent; when he make a promouncement, people believe him."

As these examples illustrate, effectiveness encompases a number of categories ranging from personal qualities (reliability, credibility, follow-through, judgement) through management functions and educational know-how. The degree to which certain qualities are considered must be weighted by each board to serve its own community and reflect its own goals.

With such latitude of interpretation, which may be just as varied as there are members on a board, each criterion should be more specifically enunciated. The definition should be understood by all participants in the evaluation and couched in

language representing measurable goals. "Effectiveness" as a term is vague, prone to misunderstanding, and hardly measurable even in a general way.

Weighting of criteria was alluded to earlier in the report. The importance and priorities given to certain criteria must be planned in advance. Some boards, which have been using check lists in their evaluations, have found that such lists do not permit a needed flexibility when applied over several periods of evaluation. The importance of some criteria, particularly if they are stated as goals for performance—or project targets—may shift from year to year, depending on the current situation. Some are temporarily set aside because of competing or overriding considerations.

As an example, a complex problem, such as regionalization, can require an untoward percentage of the chief school officer's time during a given year, leaving less time for a desired level of performance in other areas. Another district's example concerns a year when a large-scale building program was started after an anormous amount of work had been devoted to achieving the successful passage of a referendum for the building program. During that period despite the ongoing importance of other areas of his responsibility, the chief school officer's attention to them was minimized because of the competing demands.

In the case of a new chief school officer, all of the stated criteria may not be measured in the same depth at the end of the first year as they will be in succeding years. Again, in order to apply a fair evaluation, the expected level of performance and progress to be attained should be set out before each new school year.

Criteria may include certain characteristics, philosophy, and behavior that may be expected always from the chief school officer. These are commonly found on check lists which have been prepared for use in the evaluative procedure. However, development of performance targets, based on specific projects, to carry out the broad goals and philosophy of the district, permits the criteria to be stated in a way which will be objectively measurable. They can enhance and amplify the usual criteria lists and avoid judgements which are completely subjective and a prey to challange and bias.

## Advantages, Disadvantages and Obstacles

Several questions in the interview schedule dealt with the respondents' reactions to an evaluative process for chief school

officers. When queried about the value of applying such procedures, all nineteen respondents replied in the affirmative, citing reasons based on a whole gamut of educational, managerial, political, psychological and social factors. Notwithstanding, some respondents cited also disadvantages to formalized procedures, and virtually all could cite potential obstacles to the implementation of such assessment, although none claimed them to be insurmountable.

"A formal evaluation is good for the superintendent," said one chief school officer. "There are no surprises. He knows where he stands." When both the board and superintendent are in agreement on the whole process, they are more effective as a team. Good evaluative practices ensure the direction of the board, since they force the board to decide consciously upon educational and managerial objectives for the system while setting up overall criteria for its executive officer. Such a process formalizes the board's accountability by providing for a review of the various job performances of its staff. The chief executive, too, is required to decide on his goals and the means for arriving at them.

A point which should not be underestimated in situations dealing with interpersonal relationships is the provision in formal procedures which allow for individual expressions from board members and through which complaints can be brought into the open. Frequently, dissatisfactions turn out to be less strong when they are viewed openly in candid discussion and in reasoning together. Board members claim that after full discussion, dissatisfactions tend to "temper down" to fairly objective, collective opinions.

The same obtains from the superintendent's point of view. When he is given the opportunity, during the evaluation process, to assess the board's performance, the results are likely to bring some mutal understanding about the roles, performances, and relationships of both parties.

A formally conducted appraisal, including a written report, can be helpful to the chief school officer if some question about his past performance were to arise. Administrators, particularly, pointed out that this can happen—and frequently does—as the composition of the board's membership changes. A recorded assessment can be utilized to avoid *ad hoc* evaluations at a time of crisis. It also serves as a protective device for the administrator at a time of biased, uninformed or unfair board action.

The other side of the coin can provide protection for the board of education itself. Formal records detailing the board's

evaluation of the chief school officer can become the underpinnings for dismissal, or withholding of salary increments due to unsatisfactory service. The legal basis for removal is strengthened by the existence of records describing incompetency or other unsatisfactory service as well as the board's attempts to remedy the situation.

Finally, the board, which employs a well-planned evaluation of its chief administrator puts itself in a better position to cope with criticism or potential political interference. By engaging in thoughtful evaluative processes, the board is required to ask the same questions which frequently emanate from others and which the board is often unable to answer adequately. Board members become more knowledgeable, through the information they must receive and process, and more thoughtful about examining complicated problems in advance of crises, resulting in fewer "eleventh hour" decisions. Systematic evaluation encourages systematic planning which aids in the setting of priorities. While communities are subject to dissension on a limitless number of topics, a board of education which is informed, and can point to its goals, progress and plans, is showing an observable accountability to those whom it is empowered to serve. At the end of planned and managed evaluation – a process applied for positive reasons – all parties will have had the opportunity to "let off steam" and will be prepared to move ahead with better understanding of the points of views on the issues at stake.

Written evaluations provide a basis for comparison at the next scheduled evaluative session. Benchmarks will have been established, recommendations made, and tangible evidence supplied to the chief school officer of the board's judgments and expectations.

Evaluation can include, of course, not only groups of criteria to be judged, but a series of progress reports furnished by the chief executive which contain accurate information and background on specific issues. It can have as part of its methodology, feedback from staff, students, and community, thus encouraging other groups to share in charting the direction of their schools. There is very little participation by persons, other than board members, in such evaluations. Several districts have begun recently to bring professional staff into their deliberations. Such occurrences are found only in districts where the chief school officer has desired, and intentionally invited, the participation of his subordinates.

Evaluation of the chief school officer sets a good example for the district when the board and superintendent want to

institute procedures for accountability at other staff levels. Districts, devising or using measures for accountability regarding the output of professional staff and students, are finding that there is less resentment and less fear when the practice of evaluation is used for the entire hierarchy.

Respondents in the twelve districts, when asked what disadvantages there might be in formalizing evaluative procedures, agreed that detrimental features were not found in the concept. Rather, disadvantages occur more often in the use of informal evaluative methods. The task of formalizing procedures is complex, thinking the process out, planning the steps, setting the criteria are difficult and time-consuming as well. The evaluative process will not deliver on its promises unless a board and its chief school officer 1) understand the problems and are willing to devote ample time to plan and to implement a procedure and 2) to persevere and to modify the process as experience dictates appropriate changes.

If board members have individual and private agendas, the evaluative procedure is not agreed upon and can be a direct path to disaster. A broad president alluded to this problem as a deterrent to evaluation in a situation in which the school board is divided. Both the chief school officer and the board president fear that an evaluative session would result in an unfair assessment. Its effect would be to inflate the importance of negative judgments, which might be publicized and employed as a wedge for unseating the incumbent. While this remains a serious obstacle to some boards, the author believes that with the proper planning, and with the cooperation of board members and the chief school officer, it is possible to achieve beneficial results. Socialization of board members can be obtained, if there is agreement on the positive uses of evaluation as a first step.

Donald J. McCarty has written of the obstacles encountered by boards when they begin to contemplate institutionalizing evaluative procedures. He says that given the differences in school environments, it is difficult to measure the superintendent's contribution on an objective continuum. Beyond this, education itself is beset by many conflicts about its purposes and priorities which make scientific (i.e. reliable) appraisal difficult, if not impossible. He feels, too, that the role behavior of the individual superintendent is uniquely his own and difficult to catalog and analyze satisfactorily.[5]

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[5]Donald J. McCarty, "Evaluating Your Superintendent", **School Management,** July 1971, pp. 38, 39, 44.

Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles in instituting a well-planned evaluative procedure is the chief school officer's lack of interest in pursuing it. In the districts studied which have instituted evaluations, the chief school officer, even if he did not suggest it, adopted the concept and took responsibility for developing methods and criteria. In those districts where boards are contemplating the use of evaluative procedures, again the chief school officers are frequently those initiating the concept and developing the procedures with their boards. Without the support and work of the educator, particularly at the level of the superintendent, the salutary effects of evaluation will be limited.

# Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the questionnaires and interviews in New Jersey demonstrate clearly, the unsystematic, inchoate, and questionable methods by which appraisals of chief school officers are managed by their school boards. There is evidence, in most of the districts, of an uncertainty about the purposes or rationale for what occurs. Procedures are tentative and irregular; criteria are, for the most part, not predetermined or explicit. Plainly, the state of the art is very primitive. The data confirms the original premises of the study.

As these communities were studied, it became evident that conflict is increasing and demands are greater in suburbia, where once peaceful districts existed. They are now experiencing growing pains, and once homogeneous communities are changing rapidly. Even high socio-economic districts are less likely to use the established mechanisms for voicing grievances and demands. Controversy appears on the horizon of all but the most rural or somnolent communities.

Both superintendents and board presidents referred to national issues which were splitting their communities and the boards themselves. These conflicts spotlighted the performance of the professional staff, resulting in the desire to evaluate the chief school officer of the district with respect to his ability to handle stressful situations. The community expected the board to handle matters affecting the schools and the board, in turn, knew that was what they had hired the chief school officer to do. Hence, it is apparent that such items are judged subjectively when they stand alone as the measure of a total performance. If, however, they are employed in conjunction with goals for specific job performance, they begin to enrich the picture. Specific job targets can be illustrated by the following examples:

> A State Legislature has mandated the development of procedures, set by the local school district, for evaluation of teachers.
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> **Job Target:**
> *A top priority will be the development of sound, effective means of evaluating staff performance.*

There is a fundamental belief in the district in the need

for broader participation by the staff in educational decision-making.

**Job Target:**
*Several strategies for extending more autonomy to individual schools will be made operational. Therefore, any lump sum budgets will be allocated to each school for discretionary use in the coming year. A report on the implementation, improvement, negative consequences, and overall assessment will be submitted to the board of education at the end of the school year.*

The district has made a commitment to raise the reading level of students in the district.

**Job Target:**
*Reading scores of X children will be raised at least to the level of minimum competency by the end of the school year.*

Families should be given the opportunity to choose the kind of education their children will receive.

**Job Target:**
*A feasibility study will investigate the potential of a "Voucher Plan" for the district with recommendations to be submitted by a given date.*

The board and superintendent recognize the urgent need to establish better relations among the diverse ethnic and racial elements of the school district.

**Job Target:**
*As part of an ongoing effort, in-service education will be planned for the school district staff emphasizing human relations and intercultural sensitivity.*

The district recognizes the uniqueness of each individual.

**Job Target:**
*The school district will study ways to institute a comprehensive plan for individualizing education for pupils from kindgergarten through the twelfth grade.*

Performance goals may include items of varying difficulty or complexity. They may be addressed to a limited target population or be system-wide. They may be short-range or long-

range or a combination that requires phasing over a period of years. What is important is that the *philosophy, direction, and timing be made explicit enough to allow progress to be measured, to analyze reasons why the goal was not attained, or to develop additional strategies for successful completion of the program.*

It is unlikely that there will be a recession of the public's great interest in the schools. It follows that the pressures for change, for new answers, for accountability, will continue. As the costs of operating schools continue to spiral upward, as urbanism spreads, greater numbers of communities will change as they reflect the greater diversity in ethnic, racial and, socio-economic make-up. Concomitantly, a wider variety of needs can be anticipated, and these needs will, of course, be manifested by the demands placed upon the schools. The school board will have to answer to many constituencies. How can it reply? What proof can it give that its actions are responsible? Winning or losing an election for a place on the school board is not a test of competency in managing schools.

The transcendent goals, it would seem, are to provide the direction for quality education and approaches leading to it. How does the board know how well the district is performing, or how fast it is reaching its goals? Providing the schools with a professional leader is only the beginning. The school board must monitor the leadership; it must question, encourage, criticize, and suggest; it must be responsive to the needs of its clients. When the direction is charted, the board must, ultimately, see to it that its employees carry out its mandate.

A chief school officer is selected because the board's philosophy and goals coincide with his. There is a mutuality of interest which, in essence, becomes the contract between them and in which the criteria for a quality performance are outlined. There are overriding factors determining how successful the performance of the chief school officer will be. These are described by words such as mutual trust, commitment, an atmosphere which is not threatening. Lacking these, no system can operate effectively regardless of the management strategies or degree of educational leadership. No paper, no study, no consultant can advise a district on better policies and procedures without its sincere desire to progress.

Having made the assumption that the environment for better schools exists, what is actually being described in these pages is the manner in which management of a system by objectives can improve the schools' operation. The evaluation of the chief school officer is but one part of a system-wide

procedure, which Dean Speicher refers to as "Educational Leadership by Objectives."[6]

In his work, Dr. Speicher has clearly explained the steps to be taken when the goal is improved educational and managerial decision-making through improved administrative effectiveness. The basic components are four: job specification, indicators of administrative effectiveness, setting objectives, and assessing performance.

Depending upon the community, the specific criteria for measuring success of the chief school officer may vary widely. But whatever the criteria are and whenever they are assessed, it is vital that both the board and the chief school officer know what is being measured, their degrees of importance, and the methods which will be employed to accomplish their goals. What is most important is that there is agreement on an available, written comparative reference and reminder.

The needs of the district can expand or change, and the tasks of the chief school officer should reflect these needs. His evaluation must, accordingly, have some flexibility. The broad framework, however, within which the evaluative process takes place, should be established by agreement of all those involved.

An advisory committee to the New York State Board of Regents suggests that such chief school officers might be judged by the answers to the following questions:

*Can he see where to go in the future?*

*Can he make his vision understandable to others?*

*Can he move others in the direction that he has helped to define?*

*Can he keep his schools intact and effective while the first three developments are taking place?*[7]

It was the stated purpose of this study to provide some guidelines on the assessment of a chief school officer. To this end, eight questions were asked concerning the need for and methods of such an evaluation. In an attempt to obtain more

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[6]Dean Speicher, "Evaluating Administrative and Supervisory Personnel," **Personnel News for School Systems,** March 1971 and April 1971.

[7]Report of the New York State Regents Advisory Committee on Educational Leadership as described in the **Journal of the New York State School Boards Association,** Vol. 31, No. 1, March 1967.

qualitative data on the evaluative processes, in-depth interviews were conducted in twelve districts.

Without reiterating the findings of the study it should be noted that what is involved is the management of a system by *objectives.* To accomplish this, it must be made clear to all concerned: 1) What the goals are, 2) how they are to be reached, and 3) how to measure and use the results. At a time when schools are increasingly under scrutiny, the requests for a system-wide evaluation are increasing. This paper represents another attempt to make such an evaluation more effective and useful.

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## Table 1

### Procedures Utilized For Evaluating Chief School Officer By District Variables

| | District Type | | | | Boards | | President | | CSO Time In Office (by months) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I | II | III | IV | | | | | | | | | |
| Procedures | K-12 | K-6, 7, 8 | H.S. | Voc/ Tech. | Elect | Appt | Male | Fem | 1-10 | 11-49 | 50-99 | 100-199 | 200 |
| | Percentage | | | | Percentage | | Percentage | | Percentage | | | | |
| Formal | 1 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Informal | 60 | 65 | 47 | 83 | 62 | 63 | 64 | 50 | 42 | 74 | 63 | 54 | 60 |
| Both | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 17 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| None | 31 | 27 | 47 | 17 | 29 | 34 | 27 | 42 | 42 | 18 | 27 | 44 | 40 |
| No. of Responses | 85 | 107 | 15 | 6 | 175 | 32 | 180 | 26 | 25 | 74 | 45 | 41 | 15 |

## Table 2

### Districts With Formal Evaluation Procedures For CSO

| District Number | District Type K-8 | K-12 | H.S. | Student Population | Chief School Officers Length of Service (by months) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1 | | X | | 21,500 | 12 |
| *2 | | X | | 17,600 | 84 |
| 3 | | X | | 7,600 | 2 |
| 4 | | X | | 5,200 | 5 |
| *5 | | X | | 4,200 | 60 |
| 6 | | X | | 2,000 | 84 |
| 7 | | X | | 1,800 | 12 |
| *8 | X | | | 3,000 | 7 |
| 9 | X | | | 2,800 | 36 |
| 10 | X | | | 1,900 | 33 |
| *11 | X | | | 1,400 | 12 |
| *12 | X | | | 1,060 | 48 |
| 13 | X | | | 950 | 36 |
| 14 | X | | | 650 | 60 |
| 15 | X | | | 620 | 7 |
| 16 | | | X | 3,500 | 60 |
| 17 | | | X | 1,900 | 144 |

* These districts have been included in group selected for on-site interviews. Average Service of CSO – 36 months.

## Table 3

### Need To Develop Formal Evaluation Procedures – New Jersey*

| Variable | Total No. Sample | Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No. | % | No. | % |
| Elected Board | 157 | 101 | 64 | 56 | 35 |
| Appointed Board | 30 | 19 | 61 | 11 | 35 |
| Male President | 164 | 103 | 62 | 61 | 37 |
| Female President | 22 | 17 | 77 | 5 | 23 |
| K-12 District | 78 | 54 | 68 | 24 | 30 |
| K-6, 7 or 8 District | 90 | 55 | 60 | 35 | 38 |
| High School District | 13 | 10 | 77 | 3 | 23 |
| Voc./Tech. School District | 6 | 1 | 17 | 5 | 83 |
| CSO Tenure: 1-10 months | 23 | 41 | 60 | 26 | 38 |
| 11-49 months | 67 | 41 | 60 | 26 | 38 |
| 50-99 months | 38 | 21 | 54 | 17 | 44 |
| 100-199 months | 41 | 24 | 59 | 17 | 41 |
| 200 , months | 15 | 9 | 60 | 6 | 40 |

* This table does not discriminate between districts that already have informal procedures and those with none at all.

## Table 4

### Characteristics of Districts With No Evaluation and No Desire To Institute Formal Procedures

| District No. | Type | Student | CSO Tenure | Equalized Valuation | Current Per. Pupil Expen. | N.J. District Percentile |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | K-8 | 305 | 10 years | 42,800 | $617 | 60 |
| 2 | K-8 | 325 | 3 years | 25,400 | 697 | 21 |
| 3 | K-8 | 550 | 1.5 years | 54,100 | 847 | 76 |
| 4 | K-8 | 775 | 9 years | 65,100 | 855 | 85 |
| 5 | K-8 | 800 | 1 year | 18,600 | 761 | 9 |
| 6 | K-8 | 800 | 4 years | 20,400 | 517 | 12 |
| 7 | K-8 | 1,100 | 9 years | 25,100 | 562 | 21 |
| 8 | K-12 | 1,334 | 10 years | 114,300 | 968 | 98 |
| 9 | K-12 | 3,300 | 18 years | 37,100 | 701 | 50 |
| 10 | K-8 | 2,300 | 8 years | 168,500 | 981 | 100 |
| 11 | K-12 | 8,500 | 12 years | 45,600 | 845 | 69 |
| 12 | K-12 | 39,000 | 13 years | 26,600 | 688 | 25 |

Source of financial date: "Basic Statistical Data of New Jersey School Districts 1971 Edition", **Research Bulletin** A71-R (N.J.E.A.: Trenton, N.J.), 1971.

## Table 5

### Forty-Six Districts – No Formal Procedure Feel Need To Develop Formal Procedures

| District Size | No. in Sample | Percent. | Percent of Total Sample |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under 2999 | 29 | 63 | 13 |
| 3000-5999 | 11 | 24 | 5 |
| 6000 + | 6 | 13 | 3 |

## Table 6

### Groups Involved In Formal Evaluation Of CSO – N.J.

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Board of Education members | 15 | 100 |
| Teachers and Administrators | 3 | 20 |
| Students | 0 | 0 |
| Parents | 0 | 0 |
| Others | 0 | 0 |

Responses: 15

### Form of Formal Evaluation – N.J.

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Written rating form | 8 | 47 |
| Oral form | 3 | 17 |
| Both forms | 6 | 36 |

Responses: 17

## Table 7

### Participation In Development of Procedures for CSO

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Board members | 15 | 100 |
| Superintendents | 8 | 53 |
| Consultants | 3 | 20 |
| Administrative staff | 3 | 20 |
| Community members | 0 | 0 |
| Students | 0 | 0 |

Responses: 15

## Table 8

### Time of Formal Evaluations

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Annually | 9 | 60 |
| Bi-annually | 4 | 27 |
| Others | 2 | 13 |

### Evaluation of CSO As Public Information

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 1 | 7 |
| No | 14 | 93 |

## Table 9

### Presidents and CSOs By Sex In New Jersey Sample

| | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| President | 186 (87%) | 27 (13%) |
| Chief School Officer | 197 (98%) | 4 (2%) |

### Procedures Utilized For Evaluating Chief School Officer

| Procedures | No. | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Formal | 6 | 3 |
| Informal | 129 | 62 |
| Both | 11 | 5 |
| None of these | 61 | 29 |

## Table 10

## Length of Chief School Officers' Service In Relation to Evaluation Procedures and Perceived Need

| Length of Service (in months) | Number in Sample | Procedures Percent Response | | | | Need | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Formal | Informal | Both | None | Yes | No |
| Up to 10 months | 25 | 0 | 42 | 17 | 42 | 91 | 9 |
| 11–49 | 74 | 5 | 74 | 3 | 18 | 60 | 38 |
| 50–99 | 45 | 4 | 62 | 7 | 27 | 56 | 44 |
| 100–199 | 41 | 0 | 54 | 2 | 44 | 59 | 41 |
| 22 + | 15 | 0 | 60 | 0 | 40 | 60 | 40 |
| No response or no CSO | 17 | – | – | – | – | – | – |

## Table 11

## Demographic and School Data of 12 School Districts and Board of Education Included in Site Interviews

| | THE SCHOOLS | | | | | | BOARD OF EDUCATION | | | | | | | | THE COMMUNITY | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| District | Supt. Length of Service | Pupil Population | Type & Procedure | Equalized Valuation | Current Per Pupil Expenditure | New Jersey District Wealth % | Number | Board Elected | Board Appointed | Education % Elem. | Education % HS | Education % College | Occupation Professional | Occupation Labor Craft | Education % Elem. | Education % HS | Education % College | Occupation % Professional | Occupation % Labor Craft | Housing % Own Single Family | | Medial Family Income |
| 1 | 5 | 4,200 | K-12 Formal | $76,145 | $1,116 | 94 | 9 | X | | 100 | 100 | 89 | 67 | 11 | – | – | 16.3 | – | – | 84 | 95 | 17,784 |
| 2 | 1 | 1,400 | K-8 Formal | 66,378 | 847 | 85 | 5 | X | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 80 | 20 | 99.9 | 98 | 67 | 82 | 12 | 83 | 96 | 16,000 |
| 3 | 1 | 3,000 | K-8 Informal | 59,576 | 931 | 81 | 9 | X | | 100 | 100 | 88 | 100 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 85 | 95 | 12,600 |
| 4 | 4 | 1,060 | K-8 Formal | 63,921 | 723 | 84 | 7 | | X | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| 5 | 14 | 3,500 | K-12 Informal | 69,894 | 1,121 | 87 | 9 | | X | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0 | – | – | – | 95 | 5 | 95 | 95 | 21,053 |
| 6 | –1 | 2,200 | K-8 Informal | 68,750 | 948 | 86 | 9 | X | | 100 | 88 | 77 | 100 | 0 | 95 | 85 | 60 | 60 | 40 | 95 | 100 | 20,000 |
| 7 | 1 | 1,694 | K-8 Informal | 56,116 | 1,201 | 76 | 9 | X | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 90 | 25 | 50 | 50 | 75 | 80 | 15,000 |
| 8 | –1 | 6,700 | K-12 Informal | 43,721 | 890 | 63 | 7 | | X | 100 | 77 | 22 | 100 | 0 | 80 | 50 | 30 | 50 | 50 | | 75 | |
| 9 | 1 | 8,600 | K-12 Formal | 37,980 | 906 | 50 | 9 | X | | 100 | 100 | 66 | 89 | 11 | – | – | – | 80 | 20 | 50 | 60 | 9,500 |
| 10 | –1 | 21,500 | K-12 Formal | 36,961 | 707 | 45 | 9 | X | | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| 11 | 7 | 17,221 | K-12 Formal | 34,039 | 794 | 41 | 9 | X | | 100 | 100 | 88 | 100 | 0 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | 14,500 |
| 12 | 4 | 3,248 | K-12 Informal | 30,466 | 787 | 30 | 9 | X | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 0 | – | – | – | – | – | 95 | 95 | |

Sources: Demographic & School Data furnished by New Jersey Department of Education Association, US Census Bureau, Estimates by Local School District Officers; Basic Statistical Data for New Jersey School Districts 1971 (NJEA, New Jersey) 1972

Note: Data not available indicated by "–".

## Table 12

### Purposes For Which Boards Evaluate Chief School Officer

| | Totals | | CSO | President |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | % | % |
| 1. To identify areas needing improvement | 17 | 89 | 82 | 100 |
| 2. To provide periodic and systematic accountability | 14 | 74 | 73 | 75 |
| 3. To point out strengths | 12 | 63 | 64 | 63 |
| 4. To determine salary for the following year | 12 | 63 | 73 | 50 |
| 5. To assess present peformance in accordance with prescribed standards | 10 | 53 | 36 | 75 |
| 6. To help CSO establish relevant performance goals | 7 | 37 | 18 | 63 |
| 7. To comply with board policy | 7 | 37 | 45 | 25 |
| 8. To determine qualifications for permanent status | 5 | 26 | 18 | 38 |
| 9. To establish evidence for dismissal | 4 | 21 | 27 | 13 |
| 10. To support general dissatisfaction with CSO's performance | 3 | 16 | 27 | 0 |

Responses: 19 including 11 chief school officers and 8 school board presidents.

## Table 13

## Criteria Employed in Evaluation of CSO In Rank Order of Frequency

| | Total No. | Most Import. | | Av. Import. | | Not Import. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | CSO | Pres. | CSO | Pres. | CSO | Pres. |
| Educational Leadership & knowledge | 17 | 91 | 88 | 9 | | | |
| General effectiveness of CSO performance | 15 | 73 | 88 | 9 | | | |
| Recruitman, employment, supervision of personnel | 14 | 82 | 63 | 18 | 18 | | 13 |
| Community/CSO relationships | 14 | 73 | 75 | 18 | 9 | | |
| Board/CSO relationships | 13 | 82 | 50 | 18 | 18 | | |
| Staff/CSO relationships | 13 | 64 | 75 | 36 | 9 | | |
| Plans & Objectives of CSO | 12 | 55 | 75 | 18 | | | |
| Management functions | 11 | 55 | 63 | 27 | 18 | | |
| Curriculum and Programs | 9 | 36 | 63 | 27 | 9 | 9 | |
| General district performance | 9 | 45 | 50 | 45 | 38 | | |
| Personal characteristics of CSO | 8 | 45 | 38 | 18 | 38 | | |
| Budget development, passage, implementation | 8 | 45 | 38 | 45 | 63 | | |
| Student/CSO relationships | 4 | 18 | 25 | 27 | 38 | 36 | 13 |
| Graduates employment records | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |

Based on 19 interviews: 8 school board presidents, 11 CSOs

# Appendix B

## List A

**Question III 3**

### Reasons for Board Evaluation of Chief School Administrator

1. To provide periodic and systematic accountability
2. To establish evidence for dismissal
3. To identify areas needing improvement
4. To point out strengths
5. To support general dissatisfaction with CSA performance
6. To help CSA establish relevant performance goals
7. To assess present performance in accordance with prescribed standards
8. To comply with Board policy
9. To determine qualifications for permanent status
10. To determine salary for the following year
11. Any other reasons? Please specify _____

_____

## List B

**Question III 9**

### Criteria Employed in Evaluation of Chief School Administrator

| | Rating | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1. General effectiveness of CSA performance | | | |
| 2. Personal characteristics of CSA | | | |
| 3. Educational leadership and knowledge | | | |
| 4. Management Functions | | | |
| 5. Recruitment, employment and supervision of personnel | | | |
| 6. Budget development, passage and implementation | | | |
| 7. Board/CSA relationships | | | |
| 8. Staff/CSA relationships | | | |
| 9. Student/CSA relationships | | | |
| 10. Community/CSA relationships | | | |
| 11. Curriculum and programs | | | |
| 12. Plans and objectives of CSA | | | |
| 13. General district performance | | | |
| 14. Graduates employment record | | | |

## List C

**Question III 5**

### Methods Employed In Evaluation of Chief School Administrator*

1. Discussion at executive meeting of Board – members only _____
2. Discussion at a meeting of the Board and Chief School Administrator _____
3. Rating forms are used individually and/or collectively _____
4. Written evaluation is presented to CSA _____
5. Criteria for the appraisal are developed in advance by the Board _____
6. Criteria are previously agreed to by the Board and the CSA _____
7. CSA is rated on each criterion _____
8. Board consults others before completion of its evaluation _____
9. Observation and association of Board and CSA at meetings, other times _____
10. Assessment of CSA's written reports _____
11. Evaluation against goals and objectives for past year _____
12. Comparison with other districts _____
13. CSA has the opportunity to respond to Board evaluation _____
14. CSA has the opportunity to measure the performance of the Board _____

* This list was not formerly mentioned in the body of this report.